

they have made to our community and country.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS  
AFFAIRS HEALTH CARE

SPEECH OF

**HON. TOM UDALL**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, December 11, 2001*

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3447, the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001. This important legislation makes changes to and additions of several important health benefits for our Nation's veterans.

I would like to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Mr. SMITH and Mr. EVANS, and the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Health Subcommittee Mr. MORAN and Mr. FILNER, and my colleagues on the Committee for their work on this bill.

Although there are several important health benefit enhancements in this bill, I would like to speak specifically about the provisions regarding VA nurse retention and recruitment, which are taken from a bill that Representatives SUE KELLY, CAROLYN MCCARTHY, MIKE DOYLE, and I introduced on October 3, 2001.

The legislation we introduced, H.R. 3017 the Department of Veterans Affairs Nurse Recruitment and Retention Enhancement Act of 2001, is companion legislation to S. 1188, which was introduced by Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER on July 17, 2001.

S. 1188, H.R. 3017, and now the provisions in H.R. 3347 seek to address the current nursing shortage in the VA health care system, and to ensure that the shortage is not exacerbated.

The provisions in H.R. 3347 modify existing scholarship and debt reduction programs for VA nurses, requires the VA to establish staffing standards at VA health care facilities, makes pay more consistent for various VA health professionals, and rectifies unequal retirement policies to improve retention of nurses in the VA health care system.

This legislation also requires the VA to report to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs regarding VA nursing issues, including the use of overtime by licensed nursing staff and nursing assistants in each facility in order to help determine what can be done to reduce the amount of mandatory overtime.

This legislation is a critical step in addressing the nursing shortage in the VA health care system. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3347 and support our VA nurses and health care system, as well as the men and women who have fought for our country and now receive care at these facilities.

TRIBUTE TO CENTRAL  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**HON. HAROLD ROGERS**

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 12, 2001*

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize, and offer my con-

gratulations to, Central Elementary School, located in Paintsville, Kentucky. Earlier this year, students from Central Elementary participated in the national We the People \* \* \* Project Citizen competition in San Antonio, Texas and were awarded honorable mention for their project, Speed Limit Signs. I was very gratified to learn of this and want to take this time to congratulate the teachers and students of Central Elementary affiliated with this program.

They are: Paula Goss, Annette Rouse, Brooke Bergeron, Katie Borders, Kalylia Brachett, Chelsea Burchett, Kelsea Castle, Shaina Kestner, Matthew Oney, Zac Sergeant, Brittany Skaggs, Jasmine Watson, Chelsea Webb, and David Zitzelberger.

Project Citizen is a valuable program and I support it. Administered by the Center for Civic Education and funded through the Department of Education, Project Citizen is designed to engage public school students and their teachers and parents in important public policy issues. During competitions, students select an issue, study its affect on local communities, and share their findings. Schools invited to participate at the national conference won their state competitions.

Mr. Speaker, civic education and participation in the democratic process is vital to the stability of our Nation, and we must encourage people of all age groups, especially young students, to assume a role in local, state, and federal affairs. We the People \* \* \* Project Citizen fosters this, and I hope the more schools will decide to participate in this program. Again, I want to congratulate the students and teachers of Central Elementary. They and all participants deserve our thanks and respect.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. TERRY EVERETT**

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 12, 2001*

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday, family illness necessitated my return to Alabama. Thus, I was unable to vote during roll-call No. 482 (On Agreeing to the Conference Report for the District of Columbia Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2001, HR 2944). Had I been present, I would have voted "no."

TRIBUTE TO THE MICHIGAN  
CHRONICLE 65TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. DAVID E. BONIOR**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 12, 2001*

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the *Michigan Chronicle*, which celebrated its 65th Anniversary on Friday, September 21, 2001. Truly a milestone occasion, 2001 marks 65 years of outstanding commitment to its readership and dedicated journalism.

Pioneered from the Detroit edition of the famous *Chicago Defender*, the *Michigan Chronicle* has come to signify excellence in African-American journalism in its 65 years of commitment to the African-American community in Michigan.

Printed for the first time in 1936, as part of the *Chicago Defender*, the paper gained immediate importance in the African-American community and became an institution in Detroit. Independently established from the *Chicago Defender* in 1937, the paper's first editor, Louis Martin, created the cornerstone of excellent journalism, with just under 1000 paid subscriptions that year. The paper, not seen by many as respectable journalism, was building interest in the community and became known as "the colored paper." Soon after, paid subscriptions grew to 15,000 in 1940, 25,000 in 1944, and to today's readership of 47,000. In 1984, Sam Logan was named Vice President and General Manager of the *Michigan Chronicle*. His ingenuity took the paper to new heights, moving the paper to the four color format and computer-based journalism.

Longworth Quinn became the General Manager in 1944, and eventually was promoted to publisher of the ever-growing *Michigan Chronicle*. He dedicated his life to the paper and the communities it represents and informs, training young journalists to follow in his footsteps. He served at the helm for 42 years until his passing. This year, the Longworth M. Quinn Community Service Award will be presented to an individual in the Detroit Metro area that embodies Mr. Quinn's commitment to community, diversity, and serving the public through volunteerism.

Dedicated to helping promising scholars, the *Michigan Chronicle* will also be a proud sponsor of the John H.H. Sengstacke Scholarship Award. This award will be given to an outstanding high school student in Wayne, Oakland, or Macomb County to help in the pursuit of a journalism degree.

Today the *Michigan Chronicle* is making new headway under publisher Alisa M. Giddens. I believe she has the vision to expand readership, help end racial prejudice, and provide true public service through journalism to the African-American communities in Michigan. I ask that all my colleagues join me in celebrating the *Michigan Chronicle's* 65 years of journalistic excellence.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO DIANA  
STOUT

**HON. MIKE ROGERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 12, 2001*

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Ms. Diana Stout of Charleston, West Virginia for being elected the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Since 1914, the Ladies Auxiliary VFW represents the families of those who have sacrificed for our country. The organization fosters our American heritage by conducting an annual patriotic ceremony and providing financial assistance for the preservation of this nation's most treasured symbol of freedom, the Statue of Liberty.

In her acceptance speech, Ms. Stout introduced her theme, Liberty and Justice for All, which is derived from her background in law and one of the Auxiliary's main objects, to maintain and extend the institutions of American freedom and equal rights and justice to all men and women.